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ABSTRACT

Recent research is beginning to shed some light on the nature and extent of violence and crime in American schools, the role that schools themselves play in producing, aggravating, or reducing school crime, and how changes in the schools can remedy social control problems. Data from these studies indicate that: (1) despite public opinion, school crime has leveled off or decreased over the last few years; (2) while community characteristics have some relationship with school crime and disruption, schools are not simply reflective of community crime rates; (3) institutional characteristics such as overcrowding and interracial conflict influence school crime; (4) student characteristics have a significant bearing on school violence; and (5) schools can control and even prevent internal disorder through changes in rules, structure, leadership style, and social control techniques. (Author/EB)

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School Crime and the Social Order of the School

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Reliance on schooling as the medium for the resolution of social problems has long been a fundamental characteristic of American society. As a result, we are likely to become especially concerned when the schools themselves present problems for society.

Sometimes, as in the case of Sputnik or "Why Johnny Can't Read," we are troubled by the school's failure to fulfill its educating function of providing the technological and cultural literacy we feel is necessary in modern society. In other cases we become alarmed because the school seems unable or unwilling to perform its social maintenance function of socializing the young to an understanding and acceptance of social controls.

The recent escalation of concern over what has variously been described as violence and vandalism in the schools, school safety or school crime suffers problems of definition because it seems to fall somewhere in between these two models. Concern with "discipline in schools" has been a traditional problem related to the educational function of schools. Problems of classroom management, lack of interest or attention, and disrespect for teachers or for the rules have always been seen as barriers to effective teaching and efficient learning (Olive, 1956).

Such disruptive behavior, however, was not what the National Education Association seemed to have in mind in 1956 when it cited newspaper accounts of "juvenile gangsterism, stealing, armed assault and even murder" in the introduction to a poll on "student misbehavior" (NEA Research Bulletin, 1956). Neither does it seem to be what was meant in 1977 when the Senate Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency described "violence and vandalism" as "serious, and in some cases, urgent problems in American education" (Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, 1977). Here the problems are presented in terms of physical safety and even survival rather than in terms of the disruption of the learning function or even the school's failure to socialize youngsters to adequate standards of social control. Rather, the school is seen as experiencing and, perhaps, even producing violent and criminal behavior which does not differ substantially from what happens in the streets except for the age of the offenders and some of the victims.

The confusion we experience in describing, defining, explaining, and correcting the wide range of problems we see as disrupting schools may also stem from our inability to separate analytically what is "school" and what is "society." This is, of course, not a new problem nor is it restricted to questions of how to deal with violent and disruptive behavior. But what seems most crucial here is that failing to distinguish between what is school-specific about a school's violence and disorder and what is simply reflective of that which is happening in the streets means that we will probably also look to explanations and remediation in what we think we know about crime rather than in what we think we know about schools. As a result, we are likely to view school "crime" through the same personal ideologies and institutional perspectives which have failed to control crime in the general society.

This is not an argument for leaving the problems of school security to school people. Rather, it is an injunction to remember that violence and disruption in schools does differ from crime in the streets because when it takes place in schools it inevitably must affect the learning and socialization functions we have placed there. This is true not only because violence and crime disrupt the learning process and hinder socialization to societal norms, but also because the allocation of resources to security inevitably depletes the resources available for learning and socialization.

Determining the role that schools themselves play in producing, aggravating, or reducing school violence and disorder, however, presents a number of difficulties, not the least of which is the problem of definition and ends. Throughout the literature on what is increasingly called either "school crime" or "school safety," there is an ob-

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vious confusion as to what constitutes "crime" in a school as contrasted with problems of maintaining good order, safety, or discipline. Thus, school riots, drug sales and use, extortion of students, arson, interpersonal violence, theft, attacks on teachers and other disruptive activities are all considered somehow related and symptomatic of a school which is "out of control." Media coverage of such events and the even more dramatic occasional criminal acts such as murders or rapes makes no distinction between crime, violence, and disorder. Such coverage presents a view of a school system where, in the words of the 1974 Senate Hearings on school safety, "for students and teachers alike the issue is no longer learning but survival."

How one goes about defining the school-specific aspects of youthful violence, vandalism, and disruption is of more than academic interest. Trouble in the youth years, whether it occurs in schools or elsewhere in the community, fits popularly into what is called "school crime." To some extent, this explains the belief on the part of Congressional probers, educational organizations, and, according to the public opinion pollsters, public perception in a continuing serious escalation in school crime, violence and vandalism.

Public concern with school crime did not suddenly appear in the late sixties and early seventies but is the outgrowth of our postwar experience with crime and delinquency. During World War II and into the 1950s recorded crime and delinquency rates remained relatively stable. By the 1960s, however, recorded crime, both youth and adult, began to grow and attract increasing public concern. The rate of serious crimes by youthful offenders as measured by arrests began to escalate more noticeably in the sixties, increasing by approximately 20 percent between 1960 and 1964. The concern with school crime, however, is demonstrably correlated with the 246.5 percent increase in juvenile crime between 1965 and 1977. The fact that persons under age twenty-five committed 50 percent of all violent crimes and 80 percent of all property crimes in that period of time made the schools responsible in the public view, even if most of the crimes took place outside schools.

Toward an Understanding of the Issue

Not all of the confusion about the school-specific aspects of school crime and disorder can be attributed to public misunderstanding of the school's role in such misbehavior. Much of what we as educators know or believe we know about social controls in schools comes from ideological rather than research-based convictions. Most studies of schools have focused on children as learners without much attention to how the social organization of learning operates to socialize youngsters within the school. Research on schools as organizations, on the other hand, has come primarily from a concern with administration and management. As a result, while we know something about how children behave as learners and are beginning to get some ideas about how adults organize schools as places to work, we know very little about how social controls relate children to each other, to adults, and to the school. We know even less about how other social institutions relate to the school and how the school mediates between students and employment, poverty, families, the media, and juvenile law enforcement programs. Adding to our ignorance is the traditional reluctance of school administrators to report on incidents of violence and disorder in their schools or to turn to other community agencies for help. All of these factors provide little basis for any confidence that we can measure and define, let alone deal with, the variety of disruptive activities which we now call school crime.

There are, however, some recent research studies which, while they do not provide descriptive data on all of the problems or solutions to many of them, do offer some beginning answers to the questions of the nature and extent of violence and crime in American schools, the role that schools themselves seem to play in producing, aggravating, or reducing school crime, and how changes in the schools, as contrasted with changes in society, can remedy the problems we seem to be experiencing with social controls.

In 1974, as a result of increasing media attention and widespread Congressional alarm at disorder and disruption in schools, the 93rd Congress mandated a series of national studies of school crime and violence and of the effectiveness of various practices used by schools to prevent or control them. One of these studies, the Safe School Study, conducted by the National Institute of Education, produced some measure of the seriousness and extent of violence and crime in schools which is helpful in gauging the overall dimensions of the problem.[1]

The data from this study and from other research indicate that while there was an increase from the early sixties to the seventies in both acts of violence and property destruction in schools, both lines of increase leveled off after the school year 1971-72. Most of the various studies reviewed indicate an increase in assaults on teachers from 1956 to 1974 but a leveling off thereafter; an increase in

THE EXTENT OF SCHOOL CRIME

- according to principals in 7,000 of the nation's 85,000 public elementary and secondary schools, between 1971 and 1976 there was no significant increase in school crime
- for the school year 1975-76, 8 percent of these principals reported crime as fairly serious or very serious in their schools; 17 percent reported the problem as only moderately serious; 75 percent reported school crime as a negligible problem
- the majority of schools—from 95 percent in rural areas to 84 percent in large cities—do not have a serious problem with school crime
- while urban schools are most likely to have serious problems, the greatest *number* of seriously affected schools (2,444 schools in suburbs and 2,110 in rural areas out of a total of 6,713 schools) are in suburban and rural areas, which is understandable since the majority of schools are located in these areas
- by the mid-seventies, about 6,700 or 8 percent of the elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. could be described as still seriously affected by crime, violence and disruption; this translates into about 157,000 cases of crime and disruption a month, of which only 50,000 are eventually reported to the police

robberies and assaults in the early 70s; and an increase in vandalism in the mid-60s that leveled off after 1970 or 1971. For the offenses usually summed up in the terms violence and vandalism, the data from these studies do not indicate that the situation is currently growing worse.

These social statistics do not seem to support the picture of a school system in which "for students and teachers alike the issue is no longer learning but survival" which was presented to the Senate Committee in 1974. But since they are only the social facts of events in schools, they tell us little about the role the schools themselves played in bringing them about or in preventing further incidents and even less about how all of this affects the learning and socialization functions of the schools.

In the Safe School Study, and in our other field research in schools and in the criminal justice system, we found that there are some characteristics of communities over which schools have little control, but which seem to be related with higher rates of crime and disruption in schools.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND SCHOOL CRIME

- the amount of crime in the attendance area seems to contribute to the amount of crime and disruption in the school
- in secondary school neighborhoods, crime decreases with city size and crime seems to be more pronounced for junior than for senior high schools
- the number of nonstudents who hang around school is a predictor of increased dollar loss from vandalism and property damage
- the absence of a mother or stepmother at home increases the risk of a student's being attacked or robbed (but not the absence of a father or stepfather)
- children of fathers out of work tend to be more likely to be victims, while the work status of mothers seems to make no difference
- family intactness in the community as well as the presence of disciplinary measures in the home seem to reduce the incidence of crime and disruption in the school
- in general, the longer (in years) a student has been in a school, the less chance he or she has of being a victim of robbery or attack
- on the other hand, students who have remained in a particular school for more than five years (usually as a result of having failed one or more grades) have higher rates of victimization
- the following community characteristics do *not* seem to affect crime rates in schools: the percentage of English-speaking students, the percentage of white students, fifty-fifty racial splits in schools, and disproportionately high numbers of white teachers
- court-ordered desegregation did seem to produce a small increase in school crime rates

However, while some community characteristics seem to have a relationship with school crime and disruption, it seems clear that schools are not simply reflective of community crime rates. In a number of the schools we studied where there had been a decline in the incidence of school violence and vandalism, this decline had taken place during a period of time in which crime rates had soared in the immediate communities. In some of these schools, parents reported that they felt their children were safer when they were within the school than they were in their own communities. Teachers and administrators in these schools also indicated that they felt safer in the schools than in travelling through the surrounding communities. The role of the school in structuring the disruption which takes place within it is also apparent in the fact that, with the exception of trespassing and breaking and entering, the great majority of all reported offenses in schools are committed by current students at the school in question.

With minor exceptions, the risks of being a victim of either attack or robbery in schools decline steadily as grade level increases. But it is seventh graders who are most likely to be attacked or robbed, and twelfth graders who are least so. Since grade level is closely associated with age, we can also anticipate that as the student's age increases, his or her chances of being attacked or robbed at school decrease, or, conversely, that the lower the age and the lower the grade level, the greater the risk of being the victim of either attack or robbery. One striking exception, however, is the evidence that students nineteen years old and above have a much higher probability of being victimized than students a year or two years younger. The probable explanation is that these older students have failed a year or more at school and consequently may have greater difficulty getting along with their younger classmates and may be targets of aggressive behavior as a result of their marginal status.

It is at age thirteen that the risks are apparently highest. Since most students begin junior high school at age thirteen, we believe that moving out of the more protective elementary school context into the less self-contained structure of junior high school is the major factor here.

A majority of offenses in schools involve victims and offenders of the same race (58 percent). But the proportion of offenses that are interracial is also quite high (42 percent), an indication that interracial conflict is a serious problem for schools. It is also important to note that the smaller the minority group size in the school, the greater the likelihood that offenses against members of that minority will be committee by members of other racial groups.

So far, it seems clear that the age-grade structure of the school is the one characteristic over which schools have some control which seems most directly related to the nature and extent of crime in schools. This is supported by the frequent comments we heard throughout the studies about "the troublesome seventh grade." To a lesser extent, it would also seem that while racial balance is not a very significant factor and that most attacks and robberies are inter-racial, problems with racial conflict continue in schools and disproportionate racial and ethnic balances in a school can be related to victimization of those groups with smaller numbers.

In addition to these school-specific factors, there are a

number of others which have been identified as related to school crime and disorder. There has been a good deal of discussion of the effects of school size on student behavior in the literature on school organization (Barker and Gump, 1964). School size, and particularly crowding, also seem to be important in school safety as well. Inevitably, it seems that large schools have a high incidence of, as well as more serious problems with, crime and disruption.

One reason for this which was mentioned by a number of school people in our interviews is that students can be anonymous in large schools, but are individually identifiable in small schools. A number of administrators, teachers, counselors, and security personnel maintain that in a small school, the staff can identify each student so that "there is no place to hide." In large schools, on the other hand, not only do school personnel not know each student, but in the absence of some form of identification, it is impossible to identify outsiders. One frequently mentioned problem concerned schools that had to go into split sessions because of crowding. In such schools, school personnel can never be certain who is and who is not supposed to be in the building at a given time.

Some respondents said that fewer students and greater visibility of students would make for better integration of students with the faculty and with each other. In some of the smaller schools, for example, the principal knew each student and often could relate not only to the student, but also to his or her family.

The "crowding factor" was mentioned frequently, particularly in schools which had experienced major disruptions in the late 60s and early 70s. Often those schools were overcrowded and had many more students that they were designed to serve. According to many teachers and parents, reductions of the school population in the same schools was accompanied by a decline in violence and disruption. In our observational studies, we found that the loci of much violence and disruption—the stairways, hallways, and cafeterias—were usually areas of crowding. One frequently heard comment was that control of students, once they were in the classroom and could be identified as individuals, was a relief from the chaos and disorder of the halls and stairs during change of classes.

In terms of violence, classrooms are the safest places considering the amount of time spent there. The risk of violent encounter for students is greatest during the time between classes, especially in senior high schools. Yet more than half of all thefts occur during class, indicating that people are safer than personal property during classtime. In addition to classrooms, lockers are the sites of most thefts.

These findings from the Safe School Study were confirmed in our other research on the social organization of high schools (Ianni, 1977). We feel certain that school size, crowding and population density are behind the fact that the proportion of schools seriously affected by violence declines with community size from 15 percent in large cities to 6 percent in suburban and 4 percent in rural areas.

In small schools students can be easily identified, and this is clearly an important factor. But our studies suggest another positive aspect of the relationship between school size and school safety. A sense of identification with the school, with other students, and with teachers, as well as integration into the activities and programs of the school is more easily accomplished in a smaller school. This characteristic, which seems quite close to what was called "school spirit" in an earlier day, is difficult if not impossible to develop in large urban secondary schools which at times have four or five thousand students. As a result, students unable to identify with the school as a totality frequently claim control over particular portions of the school and even over "turfs" on the outside sidewalks of the school in much the same manner that prisoners set up "courts" or territories in the prison yards (Ianni, 1974). Again, just as in prison courts, these territorial claims are often based on ethnicity and not only reduce interaction among ethnic groups but also provide a source of potential conflict and violence as well. While "school spirit" has usually been portrayed as a student characteristic, it seems clear that large school size also reduces the ability of the teacher to relate to students and thus seems to be a factor in the significant level of apprehension in urban schools.

THE NATURE OF SCHOOL CRIME

In a typical month:

- 5,000 teachers (approximately 0.5 percent of the one million secondary school teachers in the country) were physically attacked, with 19 percent requiring doctor's treatment
- about 282,000 students (approximately 1.34 percent of the 21 million secondary students in the country) were assaulted, with 4 percent requiring medical treatment
- the proportion of junior high students assaulted was twice that of senior high students (2.1 pecent compared to 1.0 percent)
- about 0.5 percent (6,000) of all secondary school teachers had something taken by force, weapons or threats
- about 12 percent of teachers had something more than one dollar stolen
- 112,236 students (approximately 0.5 percent of all secondary students) had something taken from them by force, weapons, or threats
- 76 percent of the robberies (89 percent of which were shakedowns or petty extortions) involved no injury to the victim
- of the 11 percent of the robberies involving some injury to the victim, only 2 percent required medical attention
- almost half of all secondary school teachers reported being insulted by students, with the insulting behaviors ranging from being sworn at to having obscene gestures made at them
- in big-city junior high schools, 75 percent of the teachers reported being insulted by students
- one out of eight secondary school teachers (12 percent) reported that they hesitate to confront students out of fear

Apprehension, Victims, and Offenders

There are some interesting data in the Safe School Study, again supplemented by our interviews with teachers, administrators, parents, and students, which tell us something about the level of apprehension and the psychological problems produced by the lack of safety in schools. In the study we found that nationwide, one out of six secondary school students reported avoiding three or more places in their schools because they believe they are hazardous and that when their uneasiness reaches the limits of tolerance, they stay away from school altogether.

While there is not a "typical" profile with which we can identify the apprehensive student, there are some characteristics which seem to merit description. When the grouping of very apprehensive students is examined, it is found that in comparison with those rated non-apprehensive, they (1) have more frequently been victimized in the last month; (2) have a higher level of crime in their home neighborhoods; (3) are more frequently found in junior high schools; (4) decrease in proportion from urban through suburban to rural areas. Of these factors, recent victimization by assault or robbery seems to be the most prominent, with observation of the occurrence of violent crime in the student's immediate neighborhood second in leading to a heightened level of apprehensiveness on the part of the individual student.

ATTACKS AND ROBBERIES IN SCHOOL

- only a minute portion of violent offenses in school are committed by teachers or other school personnel
- in most attacks and robberies in school the offender is recognized by the victim
- in most attacks (73 percent) the victim knows the offender by name
- in most robberies (57 percent) the victim does not know the offender by name
- most violent offenses (76.5 percent of attacks and 75.3 percent of robberies) involve victims and offenders of roughly the same age; where this is not the case, the tendency is for older students to take on younger ones
- most offenders in attacks are estimated by the victim to be between fifteen and seventeen years old
- most robbery offenders are reported to be between twelve and fourteen
- in almost all attacks and robberies, both victims and offenders are the same sex; in the small number of exceptions, the tendency is for boys to attack girls
- males commit most attacks and robberies; they are also about twice as likely as girls to be attacked and robbed in school
- most attacks and robberies involve only one offender.
- attacks are more likely than robberies to involve more than one offender and to result in injuries to the victim

White students are less frequently subject to increased apprehension than members of minority groups. When both level and location are controlled for, black girls in junior high schools emerge as having the highest apprehension profiles. In addition, students who do not attend neighborhood schools and the small groups of recently transferred students (whether for reasons of previous expulsion or under desegregation orders) register more apprehension than other students.

It is important to note that apprehensive students seem to resemble the student victims of aggressive and acquisitive acts in a number of ways. Compared with others, victims of attack or robbery in schools are more likely to live in high crime neighborhoods and are much more apt to say that they are afraid on the way to school and while in school. They are also three times more likely to report that there are places in school which they avoid because of fear, are more likely than non-victims to stay home out of fear of being hurt, and more likely to miss more than ten days of school in a month.

When students victimized by attack or robbery are compared with other students, they are more likely to say that there is a lot of competition for grades in their school, that their own grades are low or below average, and that they see themselves as well below average in reading ability. In addition, victimized students are more likely to have failed one or more grades. Not only do victimized students tend to be doing poorly academically, they are also likely to be having behavioral problems in the school. Seventeen percent of attack victims reported being suspended from their present school as compared to 11 percent of the other students, and twice as many attack victims reported having been expelled from another school as compared with those not victimized.

The victims are also more likely to see the rules of the school as unfair, inconsistent, and arbitrary and to report corporal punishment and demeaning treatment of students in their schools. They also report that they are more likely to be punished by their parents if they get into trouble in school and are less likely to think that their parents would listen to their side if they got into trouble in school. If these perceptions are accurate, students who are victimized tend to live in more punitive and non-supportive environments—both at home and at school—than other students.

It is not surprising that apprehensive students resemble student victims, since having been the victim of attack or robbery would lead to heightened apprehension. What does seem puzzling are the reports from teachers, administrators, and students that the victims of attack and robbery not only share many of these same characteristics with students who have been identified as offenders, but that they are more likely than non-victims to *be* offenders. To some extent this may be explained by the fact that, as we have seen, victims tend to be youngsters who are in trouble both in the school and in the community, and part of that trouble may well be that they get into fights and other situations in which their chances of being victimized increase. It should also be evident, however, that victims, like offenders, seem to come from the same group of students who tend to be in trouble with each other as well as with the social controls of the school.

Considered together, this information on the characteristics of victims and offenders seems to conform to the universally heard complaint among teachers and administrators we have interviewed that there is a small but identifiable group of youngsters—the term most frequently heard was "hard core"—who produce the major portion of the violence and disruption found in schools. Many teachers and administrators estimate that this "hard core" group which causes most of the difficulty in schools seems to be a fairly small one—the figure "about 10 to 15 percent" is most frequently cited—and that, conversely, the other 85 to 90 percent of students are seldom in trouble either as victims or offenders. To some extent these reports may be the result of the sorting of youngsters by teachers, a process similar to labelling which we have described elsewhere, as a means through which the school seems to modify patterns of social contact and relations by defining some youngsters as uneducable and violent (Ianni, 1978).

It is also possible, however, that the "hard core" may represent a deviant group or even subculture within the school community. While members of this troublesome group do not seem to be identifiable in terms of any specific racial, ethnic or socioeconomic status background, school staff commonly describe them as students who are also having difficulty academically, are frequently in trouble in the community, and tend to come from troubled homes. These students, school authorities maintain, are easily identifiable and generally seem to be known both to staff and other students because of the frequency with which they are in trouble. Teachers, administrators, and students, however, indicate that this group of troublesome students can also find "allies" among other students when specific issues, situations, or problems arise. Thus school violence and disruptive behavior can be described as interactive with a small group of students frequently causing problems and at times setting off a chain reaction among other student groups.

A frequent problem associated with this group of troublesome students is the inability of the schools to find viable alternatives for dealing with them. The most common treatment reported is suspension, but very few educators seem to feel that suspensions are effective either as deterrents or as treatment. Staff members often complain about the inadequacy and lack of availability of counseling or psychiatric help. An increasing "remedy" used by some school systems for dealing with troublesome students is to transfer them to other schools. While these represent examples of specific programs aimed at identification and treatment of such students, there were frequent suggestions by school staff that these students require special training and socialization experience.

SCHOOL CHANGE AND SCHOOL SAFETY

By now it should be apparent that both school and community interact to produce school crime and disorder. But what makes school disorders most significant for education is their effect on the climate of the school. Thus, in addition to the actual costs in human and dollar terms, the fact that crime and disorder do take place in schools means that they disrupt learning. At the same time, since schools are charged with a major portion of the responsibility for socialization and enculturation, school crime and disruption can have a lasting effect on youth and can spread out into the community and over time as well. Also, crime and disruption and the potential for it can have serious effects on the teaching function. Teachers who must try to carry out their responsibilities under fear for personal safety find such conditions detrimental to effective teaching. There is no question that a safe school is necessary for effective learning and efficient teaching.

The responsibility for prevention and control, however, has always rested more heavily upon the school than on the community. Historically, this is based on the doctrine of *in loco parentis* in which the parent delegates part of his authority over the child to the schoolmaster. It was this doctrine which covered the school's right to discipline the child, most frequently with restraint and correction which consisted of corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion. In recent decades there has been an emphasis on the more positive developmental aspects of discipline, and the more negative forms have increasingly been challenged in the courts. One of the legacies of the considerable media attention to school crime and disruption, however, is that today there is growing interest in reaffirming the more negative aspects of discipline. Recent Supreme Court rulings have supported the right of the teacher to punish the child (Ingraham vs. Wright, 1977), even over the opposition of the child's parents (Baken vs. Owen, 1975). Thus, the Ingraham vs. Wright brief commented:

> Elimination or curtailment of corporal punishment would be welcomed by many as a societal advancement. But when such a policy choice may result from this court's determination of an asserted right to due process, rather than from the normal processes of community debate, and legislative action, the societal costs can't be dismissed as insubstantial. We are reviewing here a legislative judgment, rooted in history and reaffirmed in the laws of many states, that corporal punishment serves important educational interests. This judgment must be viewed in light of the disciplinary problems commonplace in the school.

This same decision, however, held that if the punishment inflicted was later found to be excessive, the punisher could be held liable in damages to the child and if malice was shown, he or she might be subject to criminal penalties.

The courts have also ruled on the use of suspension and expulsion by schools, usually under the challenge of the violation of the right of due process in the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. Here, in Goss vs. Lopez (1975) the court held that the Fourteenth Amendmen. guarantees that students must be offered a chance to argue their position before being suspended, and must be informed of the ongoing procedures. This same position was reaffirmed by a Virginia court in Hillman vs. Elliott (1977). An important follow-up came with Wood vs. Strickland (1975) which held that school officials could be held liable for acts which deprived students of rights, privileges, and immunities guaranteed under the Constitution. In considering expulsion, a local court in New Jersey (E.F. parent and guardian *ad litem* of J.F. vs. Board of Education of the City of Clifton, 1978) held that the penalty of expulsion was too severe, and that the pupil in question should be reinstated. Expulsion was considered a drastic and desperate remedy which should be employed only when no other course of action is possible. Despite this characterization, however, there remains considerable question as to whether suspension and expulsion are effective methods of behavior control. What suspension offers

for the school administration is a short-term and immediate remedy. Removing the student from the learning and socializing effects of the school may have more serious long-term effects, however.

The courts have also given opinions on a variety of other school discipline related topics. These have included everything from the right to publish objectionable articles in a school newspaper (Gambino vs. Fairfax City School Board, VA 1977) to a Washington State Supreme Court ruling which held that the search of a student's person without search warrants does not violate his Fourth Amendment rights. It appears that the court sees the school as a special environment with its own set of legal procedures. This is best illustrated in the text of that ruling which held that a student's rights were not violated if the school officials conducting the search had reasonable grounds to believe the search was necessary in order to maintain school discipline and order.

School Governance

Paralleling this judicial review of the more negative aspects of discipline there has been a renewed interest in the more positive or governance aspects of school discipline. Collectively, the governance procedures which mold and shape behavior are usually expressed in school rules and regulations. More importantly, however, as we found in our research and as has been reaffirmed in most of the recent research literature, they are even more frequently (if more subtly) to be found in the informal structure or social control which describes the sense of order and commitment to the educational purposes of the school. Thus, the importance or lack of importance attributed to academic excellence, the structure of order, and the development of an identification with the mission of the school or what we called "school spirit" earlier are, we believe, the important components of the governance structure of a school.

There is abundant evidence from the Safe School Study and our own research that school governance is the major factor in determining the level of crime and disruption in schools. When school governance is measured by students' perception of the school as maintaining order and teachers' perception of their ability to maintain order in class, there is less dollar property loss in those schools which show positive relationships. Where there is good coordination and mutual support evidenced between administration and faculty, there is also less property loss. Conversely, where teacher behavior indicates a lack of respect for students and where there is strong competition among students within a school, property loss measured in dollars tends to increase. Also, school crime and disruption are reduced in schools where students express an ability to identify with the teacher, report having access to teachers, and where ethnic and racial harmony are high.

School governance, however, is one of the many concepts in education which is susceptible to a variety of definitions and interpretations depending on one's ideological position. It can be and has been used to describe systems of social controls ranging from participatory democracy to authoritarian and bureaucratic rule. What we are describing here, however, is a pattern of school governance which has a number of very distinctive features. In each case we found these features to be the most frequently cited reasons for success in those schools which were safe and just as obviously absent in those which were not. More important, in relation to the question of whether it is possible for schools to institute changes which can lead to a safe and secure learning environment, we found that these same features were reported to be responsible for the improvement in those "turn around" schools which had reversed a pattern of violence and disorder.

The most obvious and most frequently cited factor was the leadership style of the principal. We were constantly impressed with the fact that the "turn around" point in schools which were once considered to have been unsafe and out of control was the arrival of a new principal. While we were aware of the fact that the arrival of a new principal usually focuses attention on in-school problems, the leadership style of the principal appears to be a critical factor in itself in differentiating safe schools from those having trouble. Visibility and availability to students and staff are characteristic of the principals in schools which seem to have made a dramatic turnaround from periods of violence. Conversely, in those schools which remained in difficulty, we found that it was the principals who were most frequently cited as the major problem. Often they were described as "unavailable and ineffective." Any of the successful principals we observed in our research had taken over their schools from ineffective principals during the low point in the school's experience with disruption.

It is important to point out that strong leadership in this sense means a commitment to educational leadership as well as control over the school. In each case where principals were described as dynamically moving the schools forward, their educational leadership and the new educational programs they installed were frequently cited by students and community residents as well as by school staff.

While the principal's style of personal leadership is important, we found that his or her ability to initiate a structure of order in the school was equally important. In every successful school we examined we found that the structure of order which represents the enactment of the governance

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system was described as "fair, firm, and most of all, consistent." In the same schools we found a structure of order and governance philosophy. It is interesting that this finding complements a number of recent research findings which indicate that a firm, fair and consistent structure of order is an important determinant of success in many areas of education, from the teaching of reading to the establishment of a school climate conducive to learning.[2]

The importance of "firmness, fairness, and consistency" was usually mentioned by students and other school personnel as well as by teachers. What they were describing was a governance system in which discipline and sanctions, as well as rewards, were handed out in an evenhanded fashion. A related aspect was that students and faculty were aware of the consequences of specific acts and that they were also aware that exceptions were rarely, if ever, made. In one school, students reported that they knew that "troublemakers" would be dealt with stringently and swiftly, but that the certainty of punishment was tempered by the fact that it was not arbitrarily or unfairly applied.

While the principal is a key element in establishing and maintaining the structure of order in schools, the teachers' relationship with the administration and with students is also important. Some principals we observed delegated considerable responsibility and authority to assistant principals, while others did not, but inevitably we found that successful principals were educational leaders and not simply "managers." Very often these principals would lead their schools through their own example, putting in long hours and not arbitrarily siding with teachers or with students. Of particular importance was the principal's responsiveness to teacher and student input in terms of school policies. In some cases this meant a receptivity to participation by students and teachers in decision making, while in others, it represented a willingness to make known how decisions would be made and a policy of following these procedures with openness and honesty.

There are also a number of characteristics of teachers which seem to be important in those schools where a successful governance program is part of the structure of social control. High self-esteem, job satisfaction, and general agreement with the principal's educational and procedural styles are significant indicators of morale in successful schools. Teachers in such schools also report that they are there because they want to be in those particular schools. Cohesiveness among teachers and a sense of identification with students is another characteristic frequently mentioned. Generally, high faculty morale seems to be associated with a strong sense of the school spirit variable found among students.

A firm, fair, and consistent structure of social control comes from a variety of sources but eventually it is communicated through rules. How these rules are made and enunciated also seems to differentiate successful schools from those which continue to have major problems with school crime and disruption. In most successful schools, rules are carefully and openly developed, clearly announced, firmly enforced, and applicable to everyone. In unsuccessful schools, on the other hand, rule enforcement in the academic areas tends to be highly arbitrary and seems to serve disciplinary rather than educational ends.

The School's Role

It seems clear that, far from being simply the victim of external social forces, the school does play a major role in school crime and disruption, a role which is demonstrably different from that played by the family, the community and the larger society. While we still cannot and probably need not assess the relative importance of the school as compared to other social institutions in creating its own problems, there seems little question that schools can control and even prevent such internal disorder. The fact is that, after escalating in the late sixties and early seventies, school crime has decreased. Today only 8 percent of the elementary and secondary schools in the country are still being seriously affected by crime, violence, and disruption while crime and delinquency rates in the community continue to grow. This indicates that schools can and have been able to resist external social trends and maintain their own social controls.

We have suggested a number of organizational variables over which schools do have control which can make major differences in providing a climate in which both order and learning can occur. Paramount among these is the establishment of a governance pattern which is "firm, fair, and consistent"—that is, where discipline is explicit but evenhanded. Schools require a structure of order and a system of social controls which permit regularity and consistency for the optimum learning and growth potential of youth. Providing a governance system which produces an orderly and safe school is as essential for learning as it is for safety.

While many of these changes are within the control of the school itself, it is obviously important for the school to maintain appropriate relationships with the community and with other levels of the educational system. Lacking such relationships, schools become isolated and insulated from the help they need from community agencies to carry out their educating and socializing roles. The results of such isolation are apparent in the case of large city secondary schools which show the highest incidence of crime and disruption. Principals in such schools more frequently report that they receive little support from the central administration of their school system than do other principals.

There are also a number of other factors relating to school crime and disruption which require resources not available within the school itself. The critical importance of the leadership style of the principal means that the training programs at universities and the selection and placement practices of school systems must recognize the educational and career development needs required to locate,

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prepare, develop and support such leaders. School size and its relationship to the dysfunctional effects of overcrowding and anonymity should be examined by communities as a factor in school design. Similarly, "the problem of the seventh grade" suggests that we should reconsider the age-grade structure of schools which presents seventh graders with the problems of adjusting to a new and much less structured school environment at an age when they seem least able to adjust to it. But while the school must share responsibility for these issues with community and society, it is important to remember that these are educational problems and that educational and not criminal justice solutions are required. However, this does not mean that schools should not turn to appropriate juvenile as well as other community agencies for help when it is necessary.

Schools have traditionally been reluctant to call in the police for all except the most serious situations, and even then it is often too late. Every major report on school crime and disruption points to an apparent tendency on the part of schools to under-report school crimes. Offenses reported to police are more serious than others, but even so, most serious attacks and fights are not reported to the police. Only one sixth of those involving weapons or injury are even reported.

The police, on the other hand, are frequently reluctant to enter schools because of the juvenile status of students and because they view school problems as falling within disciplinary rather than criminal definitions of behavior. At the same time, the deployment of teacher and administrative time to increase security measures has meant conflict with teacher unions, diminishing of educational offerings, and the presence of security devices and personnel in the school. Throughout our experience in looking at school crime and disruption, we found that emphasis on people rather than devices and preventive disciplines rather than the presence of large numbers of security personnel were the preferred and most successful means of keeping schools safe.

Early detection and identification of those youngsters in the small group which seems to be most frequently associated with school violence and disorder is also important. Early identification should lead to guidance programs and psychiatric care when necessary, as well as adequate socialization to discipline for such students from early in their school careers. Such measures should be characterized by a positive and preventive rather than a punitive style. Finally, the fact that in some major urban centers emergency psychiatric service for school referrals can take as long as six months indicates the importance of community action as well as out-reach programs from the schools.

We may never be able to "teach" solutions to the problems of school crime and disorder in the same way we have tried to teach solutions to other social problems as part of the school curriculum. We can, however, introduce changes in the social organization of schools and in how schools relate to their communities. Such changes have the advantage of being manageable for schools since they are possible within the school's own span of control and do not require major societal adjustments.

At present, however, we are faced with a very real danger. Despite research indications to the contrary, public opinion continues to view school crime as escalating at an alarming rate. We may be tempted to turn increasingly to criminal justice instead of educational solutions until public opinion catches up to research. Research on the social organization of school crime and disorder indicates that there are structural changes and techniques of social control which do work in schools regardless of where they are located. Such changes have the additional advantage of not having been tried elsewhere and failing.

NOTES

1. The Safe School Study was made up of three parts. In Phase I, a representative sample of 5,578 public schools in the United States was selected. Through a mail survey, principals of 4,014 participating schools were asked to report in detail on the incidence of illegal or disruptive activities in their schools for selected one-month periods between February 1976 and January 1977. For Phase II, a nationally representative cluster sample of 851 junior and senior high schools was selected; of these, 672 participated in this phase of the study. As in Phase I, each school in the sample had a randomly assigned reporting month. In contrast to Phase I, the Phase II data collection was conducted on-site by field representatives rather than by mail. Finally, in Phase III, ten schools were purposely selected for more intensive, qualitative field study. Most of the schools selected had experienced serious problems with crime and violence in the past and had changed rather dramatically for the better in a short period of time. A few continued to have serious problems. In Phase III schools, which were geographically spread throughout the country and covered the range of school grades from elementary through high school, field research techniques were used to examine the ways in which schools coped or failed to cope with incidents of crime and disruption and with what consequences.

   While most of the statistical information presented in this paper is from Phase I and II of the Safe School Study, the more qualitative data on school organization and social controls in relation to school crime and disruption come from our experience in conducting the field studies in Phase III. In addition, we have included data from the following recent studies of educational and criminal justice systems in which we have been involved in recent years:

   Community Attitudes Towards Organized Crime (Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the City of New York). Reported in Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni, "Community Crime Control and Organized Crime," in F. A. J. Ianni and Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni, *The Criminal Society: Readings in Organized Crime and Corruption* (New York: New American Library, Fall 1976).

   Social Organization of the High School (Ford Foundation and National Institute of Education). Reported in "Social Organization Study Program: An Interim Report," *Council on Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (May 1974), and *Anthropological Studies of Education: The IX International Conference of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).

   Case Studies in School Crime and Violence (National Institute of Education). Reported in *Violent Schools-Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress* (Washington: The National Institute of Education, 1977).

   A Field Study of Cultural Contact and Desegregation in an Urban High School (Washington: National Institute of Education, 1978).

   Desegregation, Culture Contact, and the Social Organization of Schools. Reported in *Research Bulletin Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute* 18, no. 4 (May 1978).

2. See, for example, the U.S. Office of Education Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation Executive Summary *Impact of Educational Innovation on Student Performance* (November 1976), which reports findings of Project Longstep conducted by the American Institute for Research, and *A Study of Compensatory Reading Programs* (October 1976), which reports the results of a large-scale study of Title I Compensatory Reading Programs. This study was conducted by the Educational Testing Service and RMC Research Corporation.

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